

- 12 -

CLAIMS

1. A cosmetic skin lightening composition, comprising 0.1 -
50 % by weight of an extract of plants from the families
5 of *Symplocos*, *Rubia* or a mixture thereof.

2. The cosmetic skin lightening composition of claim 1,
additionally comprising 0.1 - 10 % by weight of a
sunscreen.

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3. The cosmetic skin lightening composition of claim 1 or
claim 2, further comprising 0.1 - 10 % by weight of one
or more skin whitening agents.

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4. The cosmetic skin lightening composition of any preceding
claim, wherein the extract of *Symplocos* and/or *Rubia* is
selected from *Symplocos recemosa*, *Symplocos paniculata*,
Symplocos cochinchinensis, *Rubia cordifolia* or mixtures
thereof.

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5. The cosmetic skin lightening composition of any of claims
2 to 4, wherein the sunscreen is selected from 4-tertiary
butyl-4'-methoxy dibenzoylmethane, 2-ethyl hexyl methoxy
cinnamate, micronized titanium dioxide, or micronized
25 zinc oxide.

6. The cosmetic skin lightening composition of any of claims
3 to 5, wherein the skin whitening agent is niacin,
niacinamide or a precursor thereof.

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- 13 -

7. The cosmetic skin lightening composition of any preceding claim further comprising extracts of *Glycyrrhiza*, *Coriandrum*, *Acorus* or mixtures thereof.
- 5 8. The cosmetic skin lightening composition of any preceding claim wherein the *Symplocos* or *Rubia* is extracted from the bark of the plant.